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An <sup>d</sup>*Anum* series, one wonders how the Babylonian scribe decided on the reading of the god's name in a given literary text or personal name. On first thought one would say that in a Sumerian text or personal name the Sumerian pronunciation of the god's name would surely have been used and, *mutatis mutandis*, the Semitic. But the good Sumerian god *Enlil's* name is found pronounced *Ellil* in Semitic names.<sup>1</sup> Besides, the syllabaries give half a dozen or more Sumerian and a like number of Semitic pronunciations for the same ideogram. In the case of a personal name the scribe probably had no more difficulty than had the bearer of the name, but the interlinear translations of Sumerian texts show that there might arise differences of opinion. Have we not been too "ruthless" in our reading of *Enmashtu*, *Ellil*, etc., for ideograms which in some, but not necessarily all, cases have these pronunciations?

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### DAVID AND GOLIATH

The passage in which we have the account of David's victory over Goliath, I Sam. 17:1—18:5, is usually assigned to one of the later sources which are found in the Books of Samuel, and the whole incident is often pronounced unhistorical. There are elements in the story which are rankly inconsistent with statements in other sources which are unquestionably early. And in view of the assertion in II Sam. 21:19, an early source, that Elhanan, one of David's heroes, killed Goliath, it is impossible to hold that David, while still a lad, vanquished that noted warrior.

On the other hand, when we take up the story in I Sam. 18:6 ff., we find that David must already have achieved some significant victory, for according to the true text of 18:6,<sup>2</sup> as preserved in the LXX, the singing women came out to meet him, and the song they sang was sung to praise him for his valiant deed.<sup>3</sup> This celebration so incensed the demented king that he

<sup>1</sup> Clay, *AJSL*, XXIII (1907), 269 f.

<sup>2</sup> The text should be amended so that this verse reads: "And it was when David returned from slaying the Philistine, the women from all the cities of Israel came out to meet David."

<sup>3</sup> The rendering of this song in our versions:

Saul has slain his thousands,  
And David his ten thousands,

is quite out of the question. The song recurs elsewhere twice, 21:12 and 29:5, and the nouns are in the singular in every case. Moreover, יָצָא is a very common verb, and invariably in other places requires an accusative for the direct object. The grammatical rendering is therefore:

Saul has slain with his thousand,  
And David with his myriad.

It is not easy to see what force the preposition has, but it certainly cannot be ignored. The meaning may possibly be that "thousand" and "myriad" refer to the respective forces of Saul and David. It is presumable that the interpretation of the song would be clear enough if we had fuller details of the battle. The point of the song is that David is praised more highly than Saul.

degraded David from his position as armor-bearer, to which he had been appointed earlier, 16:21, and made him the captain of a small company of troops.

It is clear therefore that between David's appointment as armor-bearer and the time of this celebration, and while he still occupied his high place on the king's staff, he must have performed some signal exploit which gave him lasting fame among the people. We may discard the slaying of Goliath as historically impossible, but the question remains whether we must draw altogether upon our imagination for the exploit, or whether we can find it in the material that we have. A re-examination of the passage in question, 17:1—18:5, yields some interesting results.

In the first place we must put aside 17:12-31, 17:55—18:5, to which 18:17-19 is a sequel. These passages are lacking in  $\mathfrak{C}^B$ , the most primitive text of the LXX, at least in this part of the Old Testament. It is inconceivable that the translators deliberately omitted these sections on critical grounds, and the only other alternative is that they were not in the Hebrew text from which that version was made. Those sections plainly belong to an independent narrative, for in several particulars they are inconsistent with the rest of the story. The introduction of David, and Saul's ignorance of David's person, suffice to show that this narrative belongs to another source than the rest, and the chief marks of a late writer are in these sections.

We have left then 17:1-11, 32-54 as the basis for the original account of David's exploit. Taking up this section we notice that the name of Goliath is attached to the story by a very loose thread, and we must proceed to cut that thread. The only mention of the name is in a very awkward clause in verse 4, "Goliath his name from Gath," and this I believe to be an interpolation. Goliath was known as "the Gittite," according to II Sam. 21:19, whereas David's opponent is everywhere called simply "the Philistine,"<sup>1</sup> his name being apparently unknown to the narrator. In fact, this is the designation which the warrior applies to himself (vs. 8). To magnify David's exploit a later writer who knew that Goliath had been the mightiest of the Philistine warriors made the identification, and probably added the elaborate and exaggerated description in verses 4-7. After this identification was made the name was inserted in connection with the sword kept as a souvenir at the temple of Nob, 21:10; 22:19, where the original text read correctly "the sword of the Philistine."

There is nothing in the story to warrant the generally held opinion that David at the time was a young boy. Saul applies the term *na'ar* to David, but that word indicates subordinate position as well as inferior age. Cheyne

<sup>1</sup> 17:10, 32 f., 36 f., 41, 42, 43 (*bis*), 44, 45, 48 (*bis*), 49, 50 (*bis*), 51, 54; 18:6. The same term is used in the later source, 17:16, 23, 26, 55, 57 (*bis*). In 17:23 the name Goliath is interpolated as in 17:4, and the same thing has happened in 21:9; 22:10, for in these places we have the incorrect "Goliath the Philistine." The correct reading is for one person "Goliath the Gittite," and for the other "the Philistine." If the name had been known it would have been used throughout the story.

indeed argues that the maximum age for David is fourteen,<sup>1</sup> but the text gives no support for that view, and lads of that age are not usually able to say that in a hand-to-hand encounter they have slain lions and bears. The description of David in verse 42, on which Cheyne relies, really adds nothing. In A.R.V. "he was but a youth," the "but" is the translator's idea, for the Hebrew reads "he was a *nā'ar*, and ruddy and of handsome appearance." A man may be fair of complexion and good-looking as well as a boy. Moreover, it is quite probable that verses 41-47 are likewise an elaboration of the original, though an earlier one than the passages wanting in 5<sup>B</sup>. The section interrupts the narrative, and David here speaks as he does in verses 12-31, not as a valiant man, but as a youthful boaster. So far as anything in the text goes David may well have been twenty-five or thirty years old, and at such an age he might easily have won the reputation recorded in 16:18. It is worth while noting that the most distinguished ace in the Royal Flying Squadron of England is barely twenty-three years old.<sup>2</sup>

It may easily be rejoined that the incident of David's attempting to wear Saul's armor shows that he was not a warrior, but a shepherd lad inexperienced in war, and that his own appeal to the conquest of lions and bears compels the same conclusion.

It must be confessed that the difficulty looks formidable, but it can hardly be declared insuperable. The evidence shows that Saul was an unusually large man, and as there is no hint anywhere that David was above the average size the king's massive equipment would certainly be for a smaller person a heavy handicap in battle. Yet the armor-bearer could hardly refuse bluntly the offer of a king whose mental state made dealing with him a delicate matter, and he might naturally prefer to show by trial how impossible the equipment was for him, and then gently suggest that in this important conquest he would hardly dare venture forth with weapons that he had never before used.<sup>3</sup>

The fact is that David had already formed his plan of attack. With the Philistine's own weapons he could readily see that he was no match for one peculiarly expert with the sword and the spear. David was young and agile, and he proposed to equip himself so as to give his superior mobility free play. He resolved to go back to the really formidable sling, with which he had doubtless become expert in the days when he had kept his father's sheep.

The reference to the lion and the bear may be due to the association with the conditions of the days when the sling and the staff were his only weapons, or it may be due to his contempt for his opponent. He is only an uncircum-sized beast, and he will deal with him as he has dealt with other beasts.

<sup>1</sup> *Aids to the Devout Study of Criticism*, p. 100.

<sup>2</sup> Major William A. Bishop. See *Nat. Geog. Mag.* (January 1918), p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the text is rather doubtful in 17:38b. There are so many corruptions and uncertainties that we do not dare build up a theory on the passage. It is clear though that David rejected some warlike equipment which Saul had proffered.

Moreover, in spite of his fame as a warrior, David may not yet have had any noted individual conquests to which he could appeal. In the shock of battle with marauding tribes it had been mass against mass. Now it was to be man against man, and the best and most impressive precedents for his faith in his ability for the contest are the incidents when it was man against a lion or man against a bear.

To return now to the story. The Philistine's challenge (verses 9f.) implies that the Israelites were the aggressors, and that the opposing forces stood on an equal footing, a situation somewhat different from that indicated in verses 1-6, but quite in harmony with the condition following Israel's defeat of the Philistines as a result of Jonathan's exploit (chaps. 13 f.).

The defiant challenge of this terrible-looking warrior spreads panic among the host of Saul. But relief comes from Saul's armor-bearer, who declares his readiness to pick up the gauntlet. He carefully selects suitable stones from the bed of the brook, and easily brings the boaster down to the ground and cuts off his head with the Philistine's own sword. The quick defeat of their champion causes panic in the Philistine ranks, and they flee. The Israelites following the foe in retreat, and perhaps looking upon the challenger's terms of single combat as even less than a scrap of paper, pursue and slay. David was the hero of this victory as Jonathan had been on a former occasion. Saul had won no glory, and when to what he had seen was added the odious comparison in the song by which the victory was commemorated it is not surprising, especially in view of his mental state, that his mad passions were aroused against a faithful and hitherto trusted servant.

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